

VZCZCXRO0197
PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHAK #6521/01 3321330
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 281330Z NOV 06
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0092
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEKDAI/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5//
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU//TCH//
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEUITH/TLO ANKARA TU
RUEHAK/TSR ANKARA TU
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 006521

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/27/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [OSCE](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: KURDISH CONFERENCE TO CREATE UNITY IS
BOYCOTTED BY MAIN KURDISH PARTY

Classified By: Political Counselor Janice G. Weiner for reasons 1.4(b),
(d)

1.(C) Summary: The Kurdish Democracy Forum brought together six panelists and an audience of approximately 100 at its November 25 Ankara conference to discuss solutions to Turkey's so-called Kurdish problem. The conference's effectiveness was undermined by the last-minute withdrawal of the Democratic Society Party (DTP) and sometimes conflicting views of the panelists. The conference itself was nonetheless a remarkable achievement in that it allowed public discussion of Kurdish rights that just ten years ago would have led to arrest. This newfound freedom to voice opinions gives Turkey's Kurds a chance to build the policy consensus that so far has eluded them. End summary.

Kurdish Speakers Propose Diverse Solutions

2.(SBU) The Kurdish Democracy Forum's (KDF) November 25 Ankara conference to discuss solutions to the so-called Kurdish issue drew together a panel of five prominent Kurdish speakers and one Turkish speaker, an audience of approximately 100, and national print and television media. Feridun Yazar, a DTP founder who later left the party over policy differences with its other leaders, formed the KDF in February 2006 with the goal of developing ideas on solving Kurdish problems peacefully. He told us in October that the conference would further that goal by bringing together prominent Kurds to develop "a tangible, fresh approach to peacefully, and effectively bring peace, liberty, and economic progress to Southeastern Turkey."

3.(U) Although the diverse ideas of the six panelists undermined somewhat Yazar's call for Turkish Kurds to develop consensus, all speakers agreed that violence would never solve the problem. Kurdish writer Faik Bulut said the recent PKK unilateral ceasefire has created a calmer atmosphere for discussion, but warned that a lasting solution could not be created without input from the Kurds themselves. In particular, Bulut said that unless US General (ret.) Ralston and Turkish General (ret.) Basar consult with Turkish Kurds, no lasting solution could be achieved. Echoing Yazar's point, Bulut said that Kurds must reach consensus among themselves before their ideas would have an impact.

4.(U) Kurdish political party HAK-PAR's Chairman Sertac Bucak and long-time Kurdish politician Serafettin Elci both urged a federal system as the only realistic solution. Bucak called on Turks and the international community to support a new constitution that "allows all communities to organize and to express themselves without the fear of prosecution, and devolved power to the regions." Elci stated that because Kurds possess all the attributes of a nation -- their own history, geography, language and culture -- they should embrace their right to govern themselves. Elci argued that a federal system is by definition still a unitary state and therefore does not contradict Ataturk's notion of a Turkish state.

5.(U) Turkish writer Ismail Besikci focused on the "historical injustice" of being denied a state after World War I. Besikci did not outright call for the creation of an independent Kurdish state, but his desire for one was clear during the 45-minutes he spent reiterating that Ataturk and the British conspired to deny Kurds autonomy when the Republic was founded. According to Besikci, the process of other powers dividing and sharing Kurdish lands after World War I was "like breaking a person's skull."

DTP Boycott Undermines Goal of Creating Consensus

6.(SBU) Just days before the conference (and months after invitations listing DTP Chairman Ahmet Turk as a panelist had gone out), Ahmet Turk announced that the DTP would not participate. According to conference organizer Feridun Yazar, Turk demanded that more speakers and panelists falling under the DTP umbrella be included in the conference or that

ANKARA 00006521 002 OF 002

the conference be postponed. Yazar said he could not accommodate the request as the agenda had already been finalized. The last-minute decision undermined the goal of the conference -- achieving consensus among Kurds -- but served to highlight the challenge that faces them.

7.(SBU) DTP Coordinator for Foreign Relations Nazmi Gur later told us that DTP believed the conference should have been more "broad-based" by including women and DTP mayors as panelists. He also said the DTP did not want to be associated with the idea of a federal system in Turkey -- which it opposes -- by participating in the conference. DTP's attendance, moreover, could have "neutralized" their own conference, which they plan to hold early next year, Gur told us.

8.(C) Comment: DTP's boycott as well as panelists' disagreement on tactics shows that Turkey's Kurdish leaders do not speak with one voice. Despite a lack of consensus, the outspoken rhetoric presented at the conference -- and covered by national news media -- is in itself significant. Ten years ago, the Turkish state would not have permitted such a public conference and likely would have arrested those who publicly presented ideas such as the creation of a federal system in Turkey. With this new-found freedom to hash out their opinions without fear of persecution by the state, Turkey's Kurds have a chance to build the consensus on policy that thus far has eluded them. End comment.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON